THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War 25¢

Vol.6 No.4 PO Box 20184, Chicago, ILL 60620 August-September 1976

EXTEND and EXPAND the G.I. BILL

FIGHT, DON'T STARVE

VVAW members joined with workers in clearly putting the rich on target. Marching in step and in formation we chanted, "We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War, It's the Working Class We're Fighting For."

The GI Bill, axed for 3.7 million vets, disability payments cut, VA hospitals threatening not to treat "non-service connected" injuries and sickness at outpatient clinics, unemployment up and rising. All around us we can see the lies about upturn and recovery. Services and benefits won by veterans are being slashed. All this isn't the result of some evil force or person. It doesn't stem from the fact that there has been some "mistake," and it certainly isn't the fault of vets for being lazy or stupid. The rich S. O. B. s who run this system for their own profits, the Rockefellers, Duponts, Mellons, or their front men, the Carters, the Fords, the Reagans know what they are doing. Their system is in crisis and some one has to pay.

They have to cut their losses and recoup their profits. And since this system is run for their profits, for their good and not ours, they figure they can throw their crisis on our backs. It's a fine solution for them. They don't have to worry about medical care at some rotten VA, getting an education and surviving on the GI Bill or anything like that. The capitalists have an answer to all our questions--an answer that will solve their problems for them, too. Pull yourself up by your bootstraps! Make do! Keep quiet and be happy that you're an American. Crawl off in a corner! If you must make a fuss, blame it on someone else, the foreigners, on non-vets, on welfare--just fight for the crumbs against someone else.

Well, that isn't our solution. Working people across the land have been sending out a battle cry: "FIGHT, DON'T STARVE!" And that is what we vets intend to do--FIGHT!

Many of us went into the service looking ahead to the day when we could use the GI Bill. It is a way to get an education we couldn't otherwise afford and better train-

Continued on Page 3

JULY 4th DEMONSTRATION

A VICTORY FOR THE WORKING CLASS!

On Sunday, July 4th, thousands of workers of all nationalities, joined by veterans, youth and students, over three thousand in all, marched through the streets of Philadelphia proclaiming, "We've Carried the Rich for 200 Years, Let's Get Them Off Our Backs!" While President Ford and other top representatives of the class of exploiters who rule this country were huddled around the Liberty Bell talking about how this is the best possible society, about how we should be thankful to live under a system where millions slave their lives away for a few, the working class was winning a triumphant victory in a battle that had been raging for the last six months--the Battle of the Bicentennial.

Ever since Nixon declared the "Bicentennial Era" upon us and renamed Air Force One the "Spirit of '76" (much to the delight of Union Oil), the rulers of the country had been preparing for the Bicentennial. It was supposed to heal the "divisions in the country," by which they meant the workers increasing struggle against them. The patriotic music was to lull us to sleep while the capitalists stepped up their attacks on us; the explosion of fireworks to serve as a smokescreen for the steadily deepening crisis of their system.

With so much at stake for them, with so many millions invested, and with millions of Americans failing to salute as they ran the Bicentennial up the flag pole, the last thing the ruling class of this country wanted was for the Fourth of July to be turned into a day of demonstration and opposition to them. So for a half a year, since the beginning plans of the Rich Off Our Backs--July 4th Coalition, the capitalists went all-out to stop the working class from demonstrating in Philly on the Fourth.

They had denied all permits for the actions planned by the Coalition. They forbade the construction of a Tent City of the unemployed, not wanting the realities of the suffering and struggle of ten million unemployed in this country to be dramatized while the glories of the system that creates unemployment were being trumpeted.

While corporations were allowed to set up pavilions to sell their red, white and blue products and disseminate lies about how it was the rich and powerful that built up the country, the authorities used a thousand and one tricks to prevent the setting up of a Workers History Pavilion, featuring a beautiful photo exhibit on the real history of class struggle in the US.

When the Coalition refused to be de-

Continued on Page 8

Local Address

MINERS' STRUGGLE OVERRULES COURT

The first days of June were proud ones for coal miners and their millions of supporters around the country. In two cases the united strength of the rank and file backed down the courts and forced the release of jailed miners. These miners were jailed for what the capitalist class considers the greatest crime--fighting for the working class.

Bruce Miller in Kanawa County, West Virginia had helped lead the Black Lung strike in March where 20,000 miners walked out fighting for Black Lung benefits. For this, Bruce was sentenced to 6 months by a federal judge. Immediately, the Miners Right to Strike Committee launched a campaign for his release and to raise funds for his defense.

He had served three months time when the same federal judge, K. K. Hall, sentenced 17 brothers and a sister from United Mine Workers local union 7626 at the Carbon Fuel mine in Republic, West Virginia, to jail for five days. These 18 miners were "guilty" of striking in support of another group of miners.

Repression like this has been coming down in the coal fields as part of the attempt by the capitalists to put down the wildcat strike movement and to undermine the right to strike. But through this repression many miners are seeing the connections between the courts and the coal companies, seeing that the judges do the work of the coal mine owners. Even Judge Hall admitted that, "The law is on the side of the coal operators."

But hardly had Judge Hall made this last sentencing than miners at all the Carbon Fuel mines in the country walked off that night. There was talk of the strike spreading even further as the word got around that 18 miners had been jailed. The result--in less than 24 hours Judge Hall reversed himself and released these 18 miners. Then before the week was out Hall also had to release Bruce Miller as it was clear anger in the coal fields was at a boiling point.

Miners contingent marching in Philly on July 4th.

The struggle did not end with the release of the jailed miners. As The Veteran is going to press, there are 65,000 miners on strike, an action which began in Kanawa County in mid-July and is spreading to coalfields throughout the region--Kentucky, Ohio, and Pennsylvania miners are already involved.

As reported by the unsympathetic media, the miners are demanding that their grievances be settled outside the courts--the same courts which work hand in hand with the owners to jail striking miners. Injunctions have been handed down and set aside as the miners take the struggle into their own hands. Arnold Miller, head of the International Union, who had suspended miners from the Union around their strike activity, was called in by the coal operators to put a stop to the "wildcats," but as of the end of July, he has met with no success.

Despite all their efforts, the courts, the coal companies and Arnold Miller have not put an end to the miners' resistance. While miners haven't beaten back all the fines or the jailings, one thing's for sure: the courts' actions haven't come close to stopping the wildcats. And what scares the capitalists even more is the growing contempt miners show for their "sacred court orders" and system of "justice." They fear the fact that thousands of miners will honor a picket line but won't honor a court order.

SUBSCRIBE

____ ONE YEAR, $6

____ INSTITUTIONS, $15

SUSTAINERS

____ I would like to become part of the monthly sustainer program. I will contribute $_____ a month. This includes a subscription to the VETERAN.

CONTRIBUTIONS

____ I would like to contribute $_____ to building VVAW and the VETERAN.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Make checks payable to VVAW, P.O. Box 20184, Chicago, ILL. 60620 (312) 651-1583

JULY 4th: HAWAII and WEST COAST

A long ways from Philadelphia, but faced with the same class of rich on our backs, peo- in Honolulu held a demonstration on July 4th which brought out 125 people and which made the same demands as the demonstration in Philadelphia. Earlier, a tent city of the unemployed was set up right on the plaza of the State Capitol building in Honolulu. Also on the 4th a demonstration sponsored by the Rich Off Our Backs-July 4th Coalition brought out 400 people in San Francisco.

FIGHT DON'T STARVE

Memorial Day VVAW Demonstration in Los Angeles. This demonstration brought out 100 people, 23 of them veterans who had not been to a demonstration before.

Continued from Page 1

ing for a skilled job. More and more, the Bill's becoming the only way for veterans to feed our families. For many vets it's a matter of survival if a check is late or, even worse, if it's cut altogether. Of course this isn't a question for a Rockerfeller, but to us late checks mean we may have to quit school, not pay the rent, not buy our kids a new pair of shoes. To them it means fewer people collecting the bill, or the opportunity for them to pile up the interest on the back checks that we get late or not at all.

One vet from New Jersey, a new VVAW member, told the story for many vets around the country: "When I got out of the service I tried going to school, but when I didn't get a check for 6 months, I had to quit school to get a job in order to feed my wife and son. Just try getting away with paying income tax late--not only will they get their back taxes but they'll get interest. When our checks don't come all we get's the boot."

This year the Bill has come under increasing attack. First, on Memorial Day, 3.7 million vets lost the chance to even use the Bill, while almost 400,000 of us in school got a letter stating, "This is your last check, sorry about that!" On top of this President Ford wants to cut eligibility for using the Bill back from 10 years to 8 years.

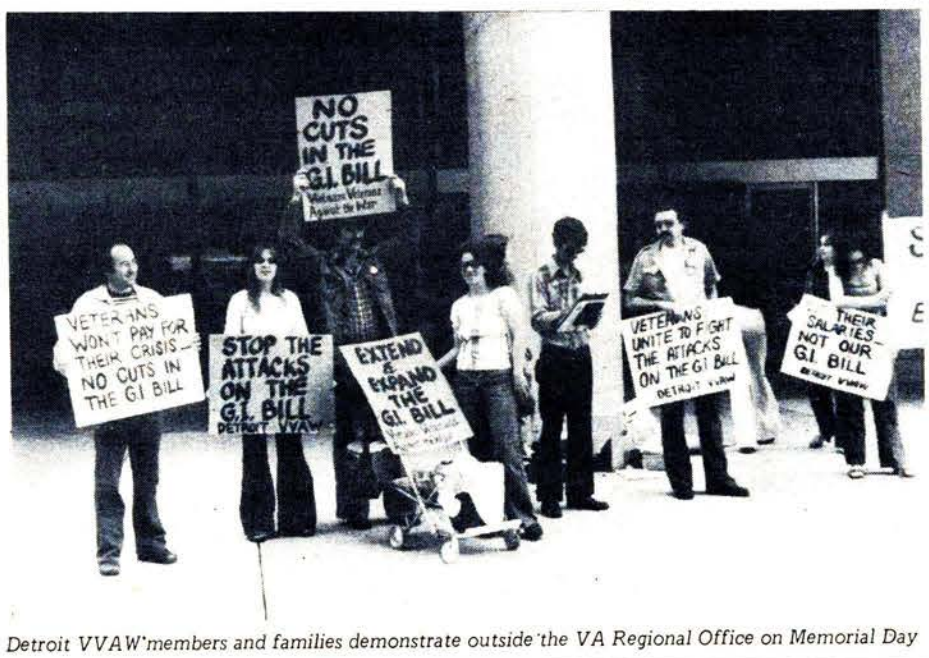
Then they put the restrictions on the Bill. According to them, all these petty rules are to make sure we're good boys and don't abuse their gift to us. They tell us what schools and what courses to take. They tell us to keep up our grades to their standards, how many times we can be tardy, how often we can be absent, regardless of the grade we happen to be carrying in the class. If we don't measure up to their standards, we're out in the street. About the only thing they can't tell us is why our checks are late and when they'll come in.

Fighting to get our checks on time and to save the Bill we've got is not enough. Even when we get our checks, they are not enough to cover school expenses, such as books, tuition, etc, and live on. We must fight for a Bill that pays for school expenses and provides a decent living allowance. There has to be an end to restrictions including the one that says that a vet has to use the Bill by a certain time after discharge. Veterans have a right to use it any time. And that means if a person works for 40 years after getting out of the service, retires, and then wants to go to school, that's his business. That's his right. And we are going to fight for that as well as for an expanded GI Bill.

VVAW is taking up this struggle across the country now. We will be getting petitions signed, holding pickets, actions, demonstrations, and organizing. Organizing vets around this country to stand up and fight means that we aren't relying on Congress, on politicians with mile-wide grins, or on petty bureaucrats furthering their own careers.

The rich think we're pretty stupid. They act like we don't learn anything from our experiences, that their lies and broken promises, their excuses and parades will get over forever. Well, they might have gotten over once; many of us went off to their wars, fought and bled for them. But we were younger then and a lot more naive. We've learned about them and their system in the midst of their wars, or sweating out profits for them on the assembly lines, or waiting in lines at unemployment offices or going hungry because of late checks. We've learned from all these things and more. We are marching now to a different cadence.

We are taking our experience and uniting with other vets in this fight. The question is not whether any of us were personally cut off the Bill or are on it now. The question is vets getting together and standing up, standing shoulder to shoulder with other vets and saying enough. It's a question of putting the bloodsucking capitalists on the line and saying, "You used us once to fight your wars, you try to use us now to promote future wars, and on top of all this you are telling a whole lot of us to crawl off and die." Well, we're not about to do that. Loud and clear we are saying No Cuts, No Way. We're saying Extend and Expand the GI Bill. We are going to take this struggle and fight for what we need and, in the process build VVAW, our organization, into a powerful voice against this rotten system.



Detroit VVAW members and families demonstrate outside the VA Regional Office on Memorial Day

Milwaukee VVAW marched to the official Memorial Day activities at the Veterans Administration.

Zionists Are the Real Terrorists

US RULERS GLORIFY ISRAELI AGGRESSION

On July 4th a company of Israeli commandos assaulted the airport of Entebbe, Uganda, freeing the 103 remaining hostages of the 250 Air France passengers hijacked by terrorists on a flight from Tel Aviv to Athens June 28th. Landing machine gun jeeps and light armored cars, the Israelis opened fire on airport installations and Ugandan troops on guard at the airport while negotiations with the hijackers were in progress. Twenty Ugandan soldiers, 6 hijackers, 3 hostages and 2 commandos were killed. As the Israelis prepared to take off with the freed hostages, they set off explosive charges on Ugandan planes sitting at the airport.

The hijackers had demanded the release of 58 Palestinians and supporters from Israeli and West European jails. Not only was this effort a miserable failure, it proved to be a propaganda bonanza for the Zionist rulers of Israel and the US government.

The Israeli raid received waves of praise from the capitalists, their politicians and media. "Courageous," "heroic," "gratifying," "exemplary" were some of the words used to describe the action. Ford sent a message of congratulations, Carter hailed it with enthusiasm and Reagan said they showed us what America used to be like. Countless editorials held it up as an example of the kind of fighting spirit the American people should have in lining up to defend the interests of the US capitalists in the Middle East and other areas of the world.

The hijacking confused the real enemy of the Palestinians with random passengers on an airliner. The US and the Zionists used it for all it was worth as part of their efforts to obscure the real nature of the situation in the Middle East and the struggle of the Palestinian people to regain their homeland stolen by terror in 1948 when the state of Israel was set and in later aggressive wars.

For the US monopoly capitalists, Israel plays a key role in the Middle East--a key weapon in their efforts to grab and hold strategic areas and huge oil profits. Not only does it serve as a direct outpost of US influence and investment in the area, but the continued existence of the Israeli state on occupied Palestinian and Arab territory keeps the entire area in a constant state of turmoil, conflict and tension. In this situation the US and the Soviet Union as well, manuever and scheme for dominant influence and control of the Middle East and its rich oil supply.

But the Palestinians have not accepted this robbery. They have refused to condemn their children and their children's children to a life of misery and degradation in crowded, impoverished refugee camps, exiled from their homeland now occupied by the Israeli settler state. Going against great odds, time after time sabotaged and attacked by the reactionary leaders of the Arab countries, the Palestinians have built their own miliary and political organizations. They have waged continuous and bitter struggle against the Zionists and their imperialist backers. And inside Israel itself, the Palestinians, increasingly in recent months, have been mounting struggle against their Zionist oppressors. Large scale demonstrations of Palestinians, and some Israelis opposed to the repressive regulations and conditions the masses of Palestinians living in occupied territory are forced to endure, have been met with the rifle and machine gun fire of Israeli army troops.

Palestinian fighter takes up guard at Jewish synagogue in Beruit, Leganon, after declaring, "Not a hair on their head will be harmed." Zionists and their imperialist backers try to portray the struggle as one of Jew against Arab to hide the fact that is is a struggle between aggression and self-determination.

All this has increased support for the Palestinians among the people of the world, and eroded much of the support the Zionists and their supporters have been able to whip up over the years. Israel has become increasingly isolated in the world as the Palestinians have continued to fight for their homeland.

The US and their Zionist allies have used the hijacking to try to paint the Palestinians as nothing more than small bands of criminals, reduced to individual acts of terrorism and sabotage. But these terrorist tactics do not reflect the character of the struggle the millions of Palestinian people have chosen to wage. This can be seen in the massive battles that the Palestinians and their allies are now waging against the Syrian and other imperialist backed foces in Lebanon today. And the mass character of the Palestinan struggle is clear in the recent massive demonstrations in the West Bank.

In reality, it is the Zionists and their US backers who are the real terrorists. Bombings, torture, the murder of women and children have always been a standard part of the Zionist arsenal. Israeli commando terrorists have gone into Lebanon and other Arab countries to assassinate leaders of the Palestinian struggle. They have bombed and strafed Palestinian refugee camps to try to demoralize and destroy the Palestinian people. All of this has gone on for more than 25 years, supported, encouraged and glorified by the rulers of this country.

But despite the efforts of the capitalists in the US to wrap the Israeli commandos in the mantle of anti-terrorist heroes and to portray an act of imperialist aggression as a heroic freedom fighting adventure (Universal Studios in Hollywood has already announced it will make a movie on the raid) the struggle of the Palestinians to regain their homeland will not diminish, nor will it tail off into the dead-end tactics of terrorist, would-be supporters.

Since Vietnam, when their dirty stinking war fell into disrepute, the US imperialist have been trying to pretty up their war efforts again under the same old tales about "defending democracy and freedom." And while they've tried to make hay off this hijacking, as the facts behind the Middle East situation get clearer, all their Hollywood glamorizing will win few supporters among the American people for their efforts to defend their capitalist empire.

MERCENARY SHOT IN ANGOLA
NO TEARS FOR DANIEL

Recently, Daniel Gearhart, an American soldier-for-profit was sentenced to die and executed in Angola, along with three British mercenaries, for their participation in Angola's civil war. Gearhart, a Vietnam veteran with a low-paying job, decided to sell his skills as a soldier to the highest bidder. Unconcerned about who he would be fighting for, Gearhart placed an ad in Soldier of Fortune magazine asking for employment as a mercenary anywhere in the world. He was hired on in Angola.

The political situation in Angola was complicated. For centuries the Angolan people had been a colony of Portugal, suffering the oppression and poverty that goes along with being someone else's colony. But all over the world, from Vietnam to Africa, colonies and neo-colonies have been rising up in revolution against their colonial and imperialist oppressors and liberating their land for their own use. This tide of liberation and revolution swept Angola, and the people of the three major Angolan tribes rose up together and threw out the Portuguese.

However, that was not the simple and glorious end of the story because of what's going down in the world situation as a whole. The United States and the Soviet Union are in contention for economic, political and military domination throughout the world. For them, Angola was a big prize not to be lost to the Angolan people. Angola is a country rich in natural resources and is in a vital military position next to the sea lanes around southern Africa. So after the Portuguese were out on their ass the Soviet Union began to heavily arm one of the tribes and the US switched their support from Portugal to the other two tribes. Both the US and the Russians played on the tribal differences to precipitate a civil war. The three tribes that had risen up together to throw out the Portuguese now fought each other with the US and the Russians each hoping that "their" side would win and Angola would fall into their camp.

The Russians went further. Hiding their rotten capitalist designs under the name of socialism (a name which they once deserved) and claiming to support freedom fighters around the world, they were able to send foreign troops to Angola (their own, and the faithful Cubans). The US was in no position to do that since it had been exposed to the people of the world as well as at home through its intervention in Vietnam. Thus the US could only send arms and help recruit and pay for mercenaries like Daniel Gearhart, or secretly encourage the involvement of the racist government of South Africa. This US blood money went to pay directly for the Gearharts or was used indirectly such as the CIA money given to the Congress of Racial Equality to recruit jobless Black Vietnam Veterans who were told that in Angola they could earn some cash and "fight for the liberation of Africans."

It is unclear why Daniel Gearhart chose to become a mercenary. It may have been financial problems at home or for some vague political beliefs or because he was a mixed up veteran. Whatever his motives were, the fact is that Daniel Gearhart sold himself as a paid hitman in southern Africa. He became an enemy of the people of Angola and of working people throughout the world. He chose to fight for slavery, for foreign intervention and against liberation.

During the life of the Gearhart case and before his execution the news media carried stories about Gearhart being a misguided, confused individual who would be leaving behind a wife and family. Presidnet Ford and other politicians pleaded his case in the "name of humanity." Such heavy tears they shed when one of their own bites the dust. It is a sad thing that the Daniel Gearharts of the world abandon their families, but as a killer for hire, selling his skills to the highest bidder, he got what he deserved for his crime of serving imperialism.

AFTER 117 YEARS,
VIETNAM REUNITED

Through the period of 30 years of fighting against the French colonialists and then the US imperialists, the people of Vietnam have firmly stated that Vietnam is one country. On July 2, 1976, this dream of Vietnamese patriots became a reality as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was officially proclaimed in Hanoi.

According to news accounts, the 492 members of the Vietnamese National Assembly applauded loudly to mark what was called "the new glorious epoch of History." Millions of people around the world who have long supported the struggle of the Vietnamese joined in their joy at this newest accomplishment. It was the first time in 117 years that Vietnam has been one country, completely free from foreign domination.

Elections to the National Assembly brought out wide participation by people in both the southern and northern halves of the country, who saw the elctions as their opportunity to vote directly for reunification. National elections had been promised and guaranteed by the United States after the French defeat in Vietnam in 1954, but US President Eisenhower and his puppets in Saigon had successfully prevented the elections scheduled for 1955. The reason, not given publically at the time, was their wholly justified fear that Ho Chi Minh would be the overwhelming victor in any national, free elections. Ike predicted at the time he would win better than 80% of the votes.

The Assembly, in addition to reunifying their country, took up the problems of the future. They are determined to continue to build socialism in the north, but will pay special attention to the building of a socialist economy in the south and, in the process, remove the vestiges of the US presence there--the prostitution, the economic dependence on Americans, and the poverty which resulted from the US driving the people into the cities. Some progress has already been made; of the million unemployed in Saigon after the Americans final flight from Vietnam, 30% are now employed and another 30% have returned to the areas they came from, often to work in the vital area of agriculture.

Because of the great importance of building socialism in the south part of Vietnam, many of the government officials of the north, experienced in socialist construction were elected to important posts in the new government. As stated by Truong Chinh, Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee, "The National Assembly has released a statement recording the glorious path of struggle of our nation, affirming the main contents of the strategic tasks, line and policies laid down by our party and state for the new stage, calling on the entire people to advance enthusiastically in labor, production, work and study for the total success of the building of a peaceful, independent, united and socialist Vietnam."

BALTIMORE

"Man, it's been a long time since I saw a VVAW T-shirt!" "This is right on time. This looks like just what vets in this town need." These are the kind of responses VVAW members have been getting when they go around to campuses, the VA and unemployment centers in Baltimore with GI Bill petitions, copies of the Veteran and VVAW's July 4th handout. Vets know that, in spite of all the crocodile tears we get from the politicians, the only thing the rich men that run this country have in store for us is hard times and bubble gum. And they're fresh out of bubble gum. Cuts in the GI Bill, no jobs (unless you want to re-up), 3rd rate VA hospitals, cutbacks in disability.

Vets aren't taking all this lying down though. They've been responding to VVAW's call of "Vets Close Ranks." A couple of months ago VVAW in this area was no more than a fond memory. But now there's a chapter in Baltimore and vets in both Washington, DC and Norfolk, Va, who want to build VVAW chapters.

Already this organization is beginning to make itself felt. On June 18th, VVAW held a spirited picket line at the VA in Baltimore. We raised the demands: Extend and Expand the GI Bill, Jobs or Income Now, We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War and End VA Red Tape.

Now VVAW is trying to use the successes of the July 4th action in Philly as a springboard to really get rolling in this area. They better look out down at the VA, because, as one VVAW member in Baltimore said, "once we get it together, we'll be back and even stronger next time."

1932, JULY 28

GOVERNMENT ATTACKS WW1 BONUS 'ARMY'

On the evening of July 28, 1932, the smell of tear gas hung over Washington, DC. 25,000 veterans and their families--the Bonus Army--had been dispersed. After months of using every tactic to try to break the fight of the vets to get the Bonus payment, the government finally resorted to the last possible tactic of a desperate state and called in the military to drive the vets from the city. Complete with tanks under the command of Major George Patton, flashing sabres on the mounted cavalry, drawn bayonets, and orders from President Hoover, the young troops had to fight every inch of the way against the veterans, battle-hardened in the trenches of Europe and fighting mad over the way their government was treating them.

Armed with homemade clubs and bottles, the veterans of the Bonus March fought the military every inch of the way, but could not finally stand up to the bayonets, the sabres, and the tanks.

The Bonus wasn't really a "bonus" at all. World War I soldiers had been paid ($1 per day plus 25¢ overseas pay) so far below prevailing wages and so far below what the GIs had expected to be paid, that returning veterans had forced Congress to act. In 1924 Congress had passed the Adjusted Service Compensation Bill, giving vets an average of $1000 in adjusted pay. But, under pressure from big business and groups like the American Legion, payment was to be deferred until 1945. 1932 was the middle of the Depression and the bonus payment was the only thing standing between many vets and breadlines. And the same Congress that refused to pay the vets their needed bonus could happily give out billions to the Mellons, the Morgans and other huge financial interests.

Veterans began to protest. In October 1931, 400 vets from 49 cities marched as a vets contingent in a Hunger March of the unemployed in Washington. All over the country vets were being crushed under the great Depression and saw the immediate payment of the Bonus as a way to survive. So, when the first groups of vets started for Washington, more and more followed. Refused transportation, vets commandeered trains--one group fought a pitched battle with police and railroad thugs in Toledo, Ohio railyards. By rail, hitch-hiking, in caravans of broken-down cars and trucks, in cattle cars, even by foot, vets started to converge on Washington.

Washington wasn't prepared. Frantic calls went out to state governors saying Stop the vets; the vets pushed on. Even the Workers Ex-Serviceman's League (WESL), a group of rank-and-file vets who had first suggest the march wasn't prepared for the numbers. And, as the publicity grew, prices on stocks and bonds fell--the financial community and power brokers weren't at all sure what the vets might do next. They did know that it had to be stopped.

Every tactic was used; misleaders of vets popped up to play on the basic trust of the veterans and succeeded, for awhile, in leading the struggle down blind alleys. Congressmen gave glowing speeches of appreciation for all the vets had done--and voted against immediate payment of the Bonus. Vets, such as members of WESL working for rank and file leadership were red-baited and threatened. Promises of government food were broken, but the people of Washington and the surrounding area helped feed the vets. Attempts to cut the vets off from the population (ranks of police lined any march route to keep the vets apart from the people, for instance) didn't succeed. Attempts to persuade the vets to leave without the Bonus, even attempts to bribe them away from the city, all failed.

Meanwhile the vets marched, demanding not only the Bonus payment but, refusing to be cut off from other working people, also demanding unemployment insurance. They lived in handmade shacks as best they could--many of them had been evicted back in their home towns anyhow. Finally, Congress managed to sneak out of town without passing the Bonus. Conditions got worse and worse for the vets; it was clear that they wouldn't be pacified much longer and that the "leaders" were no longer in command. Finally, Hoover called out the troops.

The troops were handpicked. For two months, young soldiers had been brought into Fort Meade (near Washington) and kept away from the city where they might talk with the vets. Older GIs, who might have been sympathetic, were sent on special assignments away from Washington. The government had earlier tried to get a contingent of Marines to challenge the vets, but many refused to go to Washington and the rest would not pick up arms against the veterans.

The 28th of July began with the Washington police trying to evict vets and their families from one deserted building where they had camped. They were met with a shower of bricks and pulled back. On the second attack, a nervous policemen shot and killed William Hruska, a meatcutter and veteran from Chicago. That's when the military was called in. General Douglas MacArthur, Army Chief of Staff, and Major Dwight Eisenhower, his aide, had been waiting for the order, though the military had to wait to begin the attack until MacArthur could have a freshly pressed uniform brought to him.

Tanks rolled down Third Street. Troops put on gas masks, the first time outside of practice, and began throwing cannisters of tear gas (and according to some observers, mustard gas); the vets picked them up and threw them back as soon as they hit the ground. Bayonets were pointed at the vets who fought every inch of the way; but the vets had to give ground, trying to grab what was left of their few possessions. A large group of vets were camped across the Potomac River at Anacostia; MacArthur sent his troops across the river, battled the vets out of their encampment, and burned it to the ground.

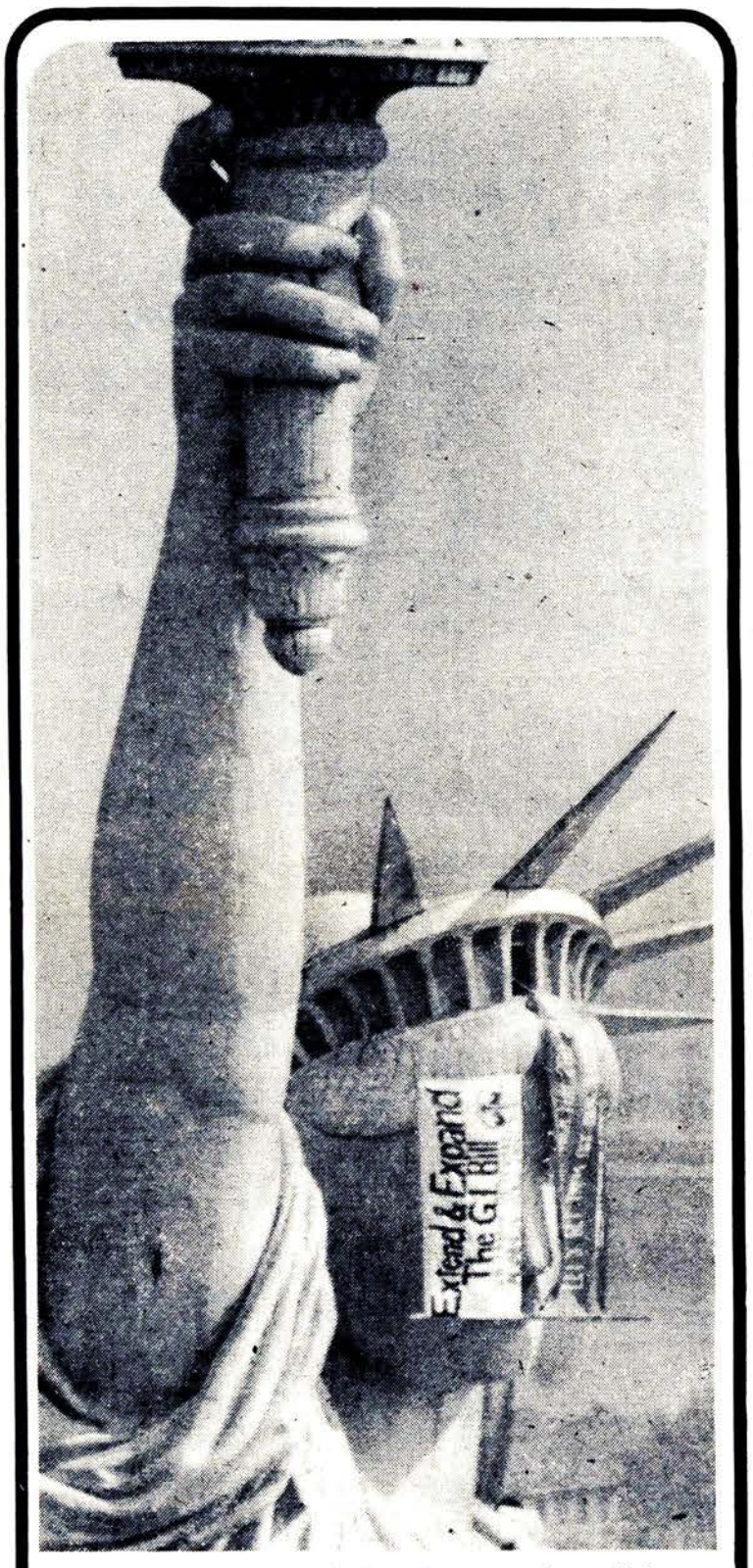
Two ideas were running around in the heads of the US ruling class and its Hoover puppet. First, they were scared. According to the DC police chief, "Some members of the wealthy classes throughout the country looked upon the occupation of the nation's capital as a revolutionary action." Second, the vets refused to be separated from people around the country and were gaining massive support both in Washington and elsewhere. The spark that they were providing for working people, all suffering under the worst economic crisis in history, was even more dangerous than the vets themselves.

Many of the veterans had come to Washinton with the naive faith that Congress once it understood how badly they needed the Bonus would come to their aid. They left having seen that the strings of the Congressmen were pulled by someone other than vets or working people. Even on the night of the 28th of July, 200 rank and file vets met on a street corner in Washington. Government schemes to divert vets into government camps had limited success. And many vets went home with the lesson learned from WESL who and fought and won an official ban on discrimination in the vets' camps.

The veterans movement did not die despite the vicious attack. Within a couple of years, the struggle of veterans and of working people forced Franklin Roosevelt and Congress to pass the Bonus Bill, and to institute unemployment compensation, a major victory for the struggle of vets and all working people.

NO CUTS, NO WAY!

VVAW SEIZES THE STATUE OF LIBERTY



VVAW seizes the Statue of Liberty in outrage at the cutoff of GI Bill for 3.7 million vets and the fallacy of Bicentennial "freedom." Banners proudly proclaim, EXTEND AND EXPAND THE GI BILL, and WE'VE CARRIED THE RICH FOR 200 YEARS, LET'S GET THEM OFF OUR BAC KS!

THE VETERAN
Published by the
VVAW - National Office
P.O.Box 20184
Chicago,ILL.60620
[312] 651-1583

In a bold and dramatic action, 15 members of VVAW seized and held the Statue of Liberty for 18 hours to bring national attention to the struggles of vets and the impending demonstrations in Philadelphia on July 1-4.

Arriving on the Island in groups throughout the afternoon, the vets waited until 6:00 PM, closing time for the Statue. In a precise and disciplined manner, the VVAW members took control of the communications center, escorted out all visitors and park employees in a firm but polite manner and proceeded to secure the Statue and building. Assurances were given people that there would be no damage, violence or thefts.

After the lower floor entrances had been barricaded, VVAW hung two banners from the crown of the Statue: "Extend and Expand the GI Bill" and "We've Carried the Rich for Two Hundred Years --Let's Get Them Off Our Backs." Throughout the night a constant security watch was kept with the vets alternating squads on shifts, and continually meeting to decide strategy. One telephone line was kept open to communicate with supporters in New York and to continually update the media on the situation inside the Statue.

A statement released by VVAW about the seizure stated, in part: "We members of the VVAW have seized the Statue of Liberty in opposition to the Memorial Day cutoff of the GI Bill which has made 3.7 million of our brothers ineligible, forcing thousands of us into the streets with no jobs to be found and no income to survive. We will not starve! Everywhere vets are mobilizing against these attacks.

"While the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars have approved these cuts, while the newspapers have tried to maintain a wall of silence around this outrage, we will not remain the silent victims of those who attack us. Just as we fought against their bloodsucking wars in Indochina, we are now fighting these attacks on our very lives. And we are rising up not to beg but to demand that the GI Bill be extended and expanded, learning from the veterans who 44 years ago this month did the same thing, gathering in Washington, DC in the famous Bonus March.

"And this latest attack is just one more reason why we are marching in Philadelphia on July 1-4 under the banner "We've Carried the Rich for Two Hundred Years, Let's Get Them Off Our Backs!" demanding Jobs or Income Now, and expressing our resolve that We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War."

The next morning police cut off the telephone communications and stormed the Statue after promising that the vets inside wouldn't be busted if they gave up voluntarily. After the vets ignored pleas from the government, the police broke their way through the barricades with no resistance from the vets, even though they could have held the police off.

Arrested and removed from the island by boats, the vets were met ashore by other vets and bystanders who applauded and cheered. The vets were handcuffed and taken away in police vans. Later, the police claimed in the press that the cheers had been for them.

Charged with "refusing to abide with closing hours" and "refusing to comply with a federal injunction," the vets were released on their own recognizance later the same day. Not wishing to further publicize the demands of the vets, the federal judge ruled late in June that all charges would be dropped if the defendants would comply with a federal court order restricting them from ever again seizing any national monuments including such places as Death Valley, Moon Craters in Utah, and other federal hotspots totalling in the hundreds. The veterans, having other work to do and seeing that the victory had been won, signed the judge's order.

Just as in 1970 when VVAW took over the Statue to oppose the continuing war in Indochina and succeeded in bringing their opposition to the American public, the June 8th takeover was a tremendous success in awakening the public to the cutoff of GI Bill benefits and forcing the media, somewhat reluctantly, to acknowledge the upcoming demonstrations in Philadelphia.

The action also had a dynamic effect on vets around the country and in New York City itself. Vets everywhere began requesting information on the Philadelphia demonstration and the struggle around the GI Bill. One man in New York City who had been part of VVAW in the takeover in 1970 but had left the organization, asked to get more information about the demonstrations planned in Philly. In all, the action was seen all over the country as a significant action that will continue to inspire vets everywhere in building VVAW and the vets struggle, as well as the campaign to "Extend and Expand the GI Bill."

Continued from Page 1

terred and organizing for the Fourth stepped up in Philadelphia and around the country, Philadelphia Mayor Rizzo made a publice appeal to the President for 15,000 federal troops, claiming that thousands of terrorists and crazies were going to descend on the city, hell-bent on causing a riot. But reports from the Senate Internal Security Committee (the agency of the US Senate charged with "investigating" and harassing the people's struggles) let the cat out of the bag. "The Committee fears," said a local Philly paper, "that a well organized demonstration could steal the spotlight from President Ford and other national leaders."

The masses of people in Philadelphia were told that the demonstration would never happen, just as they constantly tell the workers that we can never unite our ranks, fight back and win victories.

Demonstrations Begin

Such was the situation on the night of June 30 when the first contingents of workers from around the country showed up in Philadelphia, after holding a successful demonstration demanding Jobs or Income Now! (one of the two demands of the Coalition) earlier in the day from the steps of the Capitol in Washington DC. With the outlawing of Tent City, a Tent City in Exile was set up on the grounds of several Philadelphia churches.

Early the next morning the wake-up call went out. After breakfast and some early morning meetings, the demonstrators loaded onto the flat bed trucks that were used throughout the demonstrations to transport people around the city and to have "marches on wheels" throughout many of Philly's working class neighborhoods during the four days of struggle.

Hundreds converged on the Philadelphia unemployment center where a spirited picket line was held demanding jobs or income. From there a march headed toward City Hall to support the struggle of Philadelphia city workers who were in the midst of a big fight, including job actions, to beat back the city's attempt to make them pick between big layoffs or a wage freeze. City Hall is right in downtown Philadelphia, the very site the capitalists declared off-limits to a July 4th march. While chants of "Victory to the City Workers" were rocking the City Hall, an aide to Rizzo was heard to ask the mayor, "Why don't you stop them?" Rizzo, who tries to portray himself as a John Wayne type, replied in a whine, "There's nothing I can do about it."

The reason Rizzo and Co. were unable to do anything about it was that the demonstration spoke to the demands of millions of people and had won broad support throughout Philadelphia. The discipline and tight unity and sense of purpose of the workers and others was so strong that it came through on the newspapers and TV, as well as to passersby, putting the lie to their picture of these workers as a handful of malcontents trying to vent their personal frustrations.

In court, a handful of self-appointed "community leaders" (mostly on the federal payroll) claiming to represent the people of North Philadelphia were acting out a new scene in the capitlists' efforts to prevent the demonstration. These "leaders" claimed that the Rich Off Our Backs--July 4th Coalition had no support from the people in the area, that all we wanted to do was to provoke a police attack on the people.

WE'VE CARRIE
LET'S GET

June 30: Hundreds of unemployed workers including veterans march on Washington, DC.

All this was part of the capitalists' second line of defense (after the struggle had won the legal right to march a few weeks earlier), try to divide people by nationality, by trying to portray the Coalition as "all white invaders" of a community. A city councilman even called for gang members to "defend" the park from the Coalition.

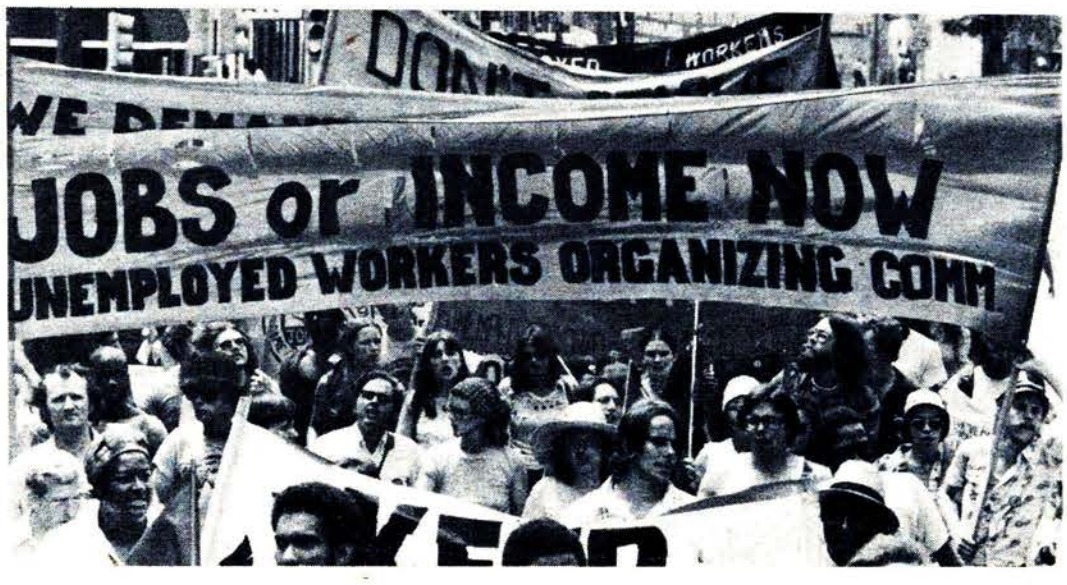
But despite these "divide and conquer" tactics everyone, even the press, could see that workers of all nationalities were participating and strongly united in the demonstrations.

When this failed, when many community people voiced their support of the demonstration, when their suit even got turned down in court, still these "community leaders" hadn't given up in their effort to help Rizzo stop the demonstration.

They tried to stop a rally that evening in the neighborhood park where the July 4th rally had been scheduled. They set up a picket line... of eight adults and twenty children. Meanwhile hundreds of ordinary people from the community were there to see what would happen and were very supportive of the Coaltion.

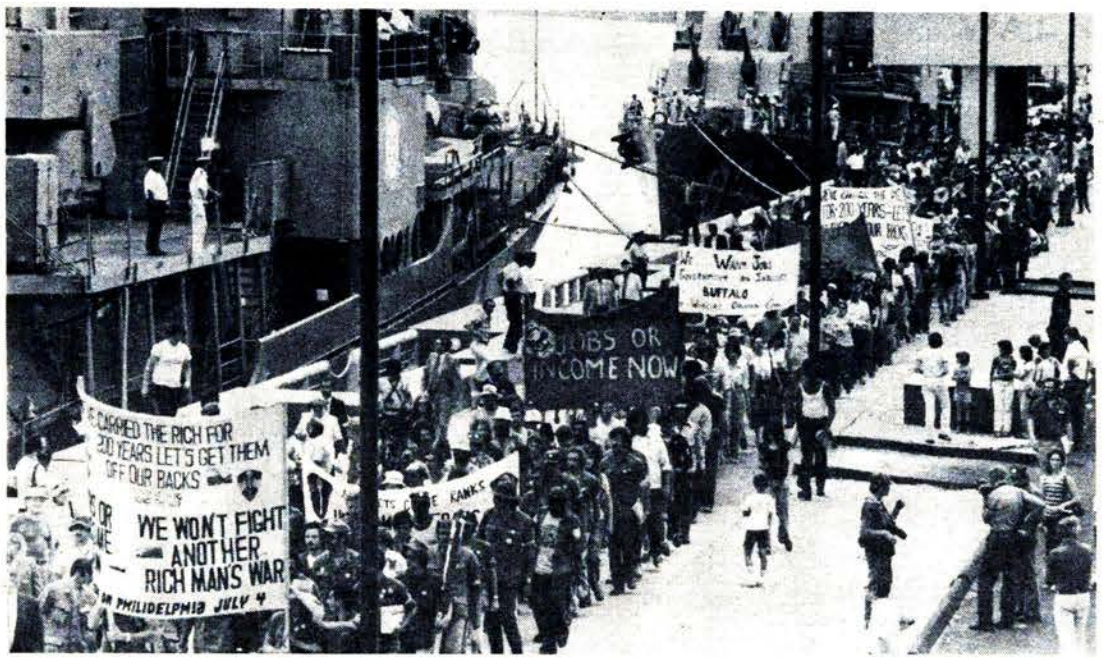
The police used the "mass action" of the eight poverty pimps as an excuse to order the Coalition out of the park, saying that it would provoke a confrontation with the community. With busloads of uniformed and planclothed police in the vicinity poised for the attack, the Coalition wisely avoided the trap and shifted the rally to another location. The ruling class had itched for a police attack to wipe out the gains the Coalition had made in the march to City Hall earlier in the day, be able to portray the demonstrators as crazy fanatics, and have an excuse to cancel the permits for the demonstration on the Fourth.

And so it went for the four days of demonstrations--a toe-to-toe battle between the forces of the working class and the capitalists, a fight over much more than the right to demonstrate--a battle to reach out to the millions of American workers with what the system of capitalism is all about and help advance the struggle against the enemy. A battle to confront all the calls



July 4: Thousands of workers march in contingents of steel, auto, garment, electrical, miners, as well as unemployed, veterans and students.

D THE RICH FOR 200 YEARS THEM OFF OUR BACKS!



July 2: VVAW leads demonstration in Philly loudly proclaiming "We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War."

for patriotism and national unity with two of the crucial struggles of the working class --the fight against unemployment and the growing danger of war.

To the Workers of Philadelphia

Part of this battle was to go out among the masses of workers in Philadelphia and let them see with their own eyes what the demonstration was all about. Going to City Hall in support of the city workers was only the first step in doing this; the next days of demonstrations included actions at Philadelphia General Hospital (the city's only public hospital and slated to be closed) and a Firestone Tire outlet in support of the nationwide rubber strike.

Wherever the truck loads of demonstrators rolled workers of Philadelphia were eager for the latest word about the demonstration and in many cases shouted their support and raised clenched fists. The demonstration and its demands were well-known among workers in Philly. One group of demonstrating workers told how this became clear to them. As their contingent arrived in town a red, white and blue trolley car passed them by. Some tourists on board asked the driver what was going on. "They're with the Rich Off Our Backs--July 4th Coalition," replied the driver; "They're here to say that 'We've carried the rich for two hundred years, let's get them off our backs.'" Then he waved his greetings to the workers' contingent.

Meanwhile, in the courts, the capitalists' little band of professional poverty officials made a last ditch effort to scuttle the demonstration, getting a two-bit local judge to demand on July 2 that a million dollar "deposit" be made if the July 4th rally was to be held. Thus, less than 48 hours before the July 4th demonstration, the authorities had succeeded in getting an order that would have effectively banned our march and rally.

But it was too late for this trick to work. All across the country people had their eyes on Philadelphia, thousands had either left or were packing their bags to make it to Philly for the Fourth. In Philly itself the demonstration was the talk of the town; the first few days of demonstrations had exploded Rizzo's lie about violence-crazed fanatics and showed that the demonstrations were stamped with the discipline and determination of the working class.

To ban the demonstration at that point would have dealt a shattering blow to one of the basic purposes of having the Bicentennial at all--to have a song-and-dance about how "democratic" the capitalist USA is, how the government represents "all the people" worker and capitalist alike. Faced with this, the federal court judge (the very one who had passed an earlier ruling keeping the demonstration out of Center City and restricting other activities) was forced to come up with a decision reversing the ruling of the local Philadelphia judge and allow us our rally on the Fourth.

The next moring, July 3, the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, marching in formation, led hundreds chanting "We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War" (the other demand of the Coalition) to the site of one of Philadelphia's many monuments to the rule of the rich, the flagship from which Admiral Dewey commanded US forces in the Spanish-American war,

At the site, a steelworker spoke of his refusal to go to Vietnam when the military ordered him to go fight for the rich, of the 19 months he was confined in Leavenworth as a result, and of the unity of the workers in his plant today around the demands of the demonstrations. Another vet described being in Vietnam during the time that VVAW members were throwing their medals back at the rich during a demonstration in 1971, and thinking to himself that there's an organization I want to join.

The marchers then moved to the pier where a US destroyer, one which had been used in Vietnam, was moored next to a Brazilian ship. A Navy veteran spoke of the experience of vets in fighting against the military brass and their rich bosses, and told the sailors "If they ask you to go to war to die for them, throw the officers overboard." The Navy brass locked the sailors below decks. Then, speaking in Portuguese, the vet talked to the Brazilian sailors about the unity of GIs all over the world, and the need to fight for their own class interests and against the rich and their wars for profit.

Workers Assemble

That afternoon a tremendous and moving scene took place in a park in Philly as truck load after truck load brought in some two thousand workers and other fighters from all around the country.

As the crowd grew and grew, the workers gathered in the park saw developing before their eyes what we had been fighting for half a year. Workers converging from plants from coast-to-coast, from unemployment lines, from cities that are falling into decay as capitalism sinks deeper into crisis. From many different battlefields where the workers are locked into battle with those who live off our labor and seek to drive us into the dirt. They saw young people, many of whom only months before saw nothing but unemployment, decay, perhaps a uniform in their future, practicing marching, determined to take an organized and powerful part in the next day's march.

As people who had been in Philadelphia filled in the new arrivals about the events of the last few days, it became crystal

Continued on Page 10

Contingent of unemployed workers led by UWOC gets together from across the country.

JULY 4th...

Continued from Page 9

clear to everyone that the next day we would be taking a step of historic importance, of gathering together the forces of our class, backed by the struggle of millions, marching in defiance of the capitalists who swore to stop us, and declaring our determination to get the rich off our backs.

That night over two thousand gathered in the Arena, a local concert hall, to hold a concert of fighting, working class music and speeches--another event the authorities of Philadelphia had declared would never happen. As the MC opened his remarks with "Fellow Workers," thunderous applause exploded at this simple statement of who we are, the simple fact that there we were, united, in spite of all obstacles. The songs of struggle and the enthusiasm of the crowd shook the rafters, the determination of the workers to make our statement to the rulers of the country and our fellow workers from coast to coast grew stronger. Everyone was ready for the next day-- the Fourth of July.

News reports blasted on the air waves on the eve of the Fourth making it clear that the demonstrations, together with the mood of millions, had already gone a long way in popping the Bicentennial balloon. Years ago Philadelphia, site of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the Liberty Bell, had been targeted as the focus of the Bicentennial events. But thousands were in Philadelphia prepared to expose the capitalists' preaching of "liberty and justice for all" as a thin mask covering the dictatorship of exploiters. Predictions of six million tourists fell flat on their face as most Americans were in no mood to celebrate, and Rizzo's threat of troops made Philadelphia seem like a bad place to have children watch fireworks. All of a sudden a bunch of old ships sailing into New York's Hudson River was being heralded as the center ring of the Bicentennial circus--as if that had been the game plan all along.

Thus, even before the last act of the Bicentennial battle was played out, the capitalitsts final act of desperation came into sharper focus--do their best to pretend that Philadelphia had never happened, try to blunt the effects of the demonstration by a conspiracy of silence, largely write off tens of millions of dollars in investments and years of planning that were supposed to make Philadelphia the scene of millions of working people joining their exploiters in celebrating the rule of the rich.

THE MARCH

Yet as the marchers gathered on the corner of Broad and Girard it was clear that nothing could keep the message of the demonstration from reaching millions of our class in cities all across the country. The banners waving in the air and the faces of the working people assembled showed that people were there not only to put the lie to the rulers' Bicentennial hogwash, but to take a giant step forward in uniting our class and aiming our struggle squarely at the enemy--the capitalist ruling class and their domination of society.

From Detroit and elsewhere came a contingent of auto workers in the midst of a fight to advance their struggle when the auto contract expires later this summer. From Appalachia came a group of miners where a fierce battle has been going on for years against the mine owners and against their golfing partners in the leadership of the United Mine Workers who have been trying to take the weapon of striking away from the rank and file. Garment workers from the sweat shops of the East Coast; steelworkers from major steel centers like the mammoth mills of Chicago and Gary, Indiana; postal workers from around the country; electronics workers from Houston and many cities and on and on the banners stretched till they faded in a colorful sea of working class struggle.

A contingent of unemployed workers, hundreds strong, were there ready to march with petitions from the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee bearing the signatures of one quarter of a million workers supporting the demand for Jobs or Income Now!

Spearheaded by a contingent of VVAW members marching in step and chanting "We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War--It's the Working Class We're Fighting For," thousands poured into the streets. The heart and backbone of the march were the workers, employed and unemployed, standing up as a class against our exploiters. And the banners of the Revolutionary Student Brigade, the enthusiasm of the youth contingent, the cadence of the veterans, were living proof that as the workers stand up and fight as a class against the exploiters we will draw to our ranks the great majority of people of this country who suffer under the rule of capital.

Busloads of police surrounded the march area, snipers were poised on roof tops and police on horseback milled around the fringes of the crowd. They were powerless to stop the march--to attack it then would have enraged millions and blown the whole cover off the Bicentennial propaganda. Having failed to stop the march, they hoped to intimidate the masses of people in Philadelphia from joining the demonstration

But many joined and along the line of march were thousands of people from Philadelphia, mostly encouraging the marchers passing by and eagerly taking leaflets and purchasing literature.

Many of the on-lookers were standing next to some of the 60,000 abandoned homes in the "cradle of liberty" appropriately labelled by Coalition posters as "another monument to the rule of the rich."

As workers went marching by, Black, white, Latino, Asian and other nationalities, young and old, from every corner of the nation, a similar thought ran through the minds of the workers present: "We're doing what they said we could never do, uniting our ranks and standing up as a class."

When the march triumphatly reached Norris Park, the speaker on the podium proclaimed, "We've Done It" to the cheers of the demonstrators. At the rally speakers from many battlefronts addressed the crowd and spoke of the direction our struggle must take.

A highlight of the demonstration was the speech by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, one of the initiating organizations of the Coalition. He pointed to the historic nature of the demonstration that was taking place, to the potential strength and power shown by the thousands assembled there representing the struggle of millions of exploited and oppressed in this country. He spoke of how the demonstration pointed to the future of our struggle. "We make society run, why can't we run society?"

Avakian pointed out that while the 3000 gathered in the park was a small number relative to the millions of workers in this country, capitalism itself compels the workers to struggle as it seeks to squeeze more and more out of our labor and increase our suffering; that despite whatever setbacks and reversals the working class might suffer, the demonstration proves our potential to grow stronger until the working class makes revolution and begins building a new society where it is impossible for a few to grow rich and ride on the backs of the many.

The working class won a tremendous victory in Philadelphia on July 4th. The capitalists were prevented from having a clear field from which to spew forth their poisonous lies about how everyone would, and is, uniting behind them and their system. In opposition to this the working class made a strong political statement, turning the Bicentennial from simply a celebration of exploitation into a battleground against the capitalists challenging their myth of democracy and freedom with an exposure of their rule.

The Bicentennial demonstration grew out of the struggle of the working class. The workers there came from all different battlefronts against the capitalists, yet the demonstration was more than simply bringing together those workers and those struggles. It was a battle in the political arena; a battle by the forces of the working class consciously striving to get the rich off our backs against the whole class of exploiters and their government and political representatives that they use to enfore their exploitation.

The Bicentennial demonstration was a great inspiration for the thousands who participated in it and for the tens of thousands more who backed it all the way. It had a great effect on the workers of Philly for whom the demonstration was living proof that is is possible to go up against the capitalists and their servants like Mayor Rizzo and win victories. And for millions of workers across the country who heard about the action, the demonstration had an important impact--showing the beginnings of a united, powerful workers movement aimed squarely at the ruling class.

As workers left Philadelphia for the homefront where struggle is raging, they took with them the determination to build each of these battles as part of the overall war our class must wage against the exploiters, to advance on the victories won in the Battle of the Bicentennial in building all our struggles as part of the revolutionary struggle of the working class which battles all of the oppression and injustice in society to build a movement that will succeed in wiping out the capitalists' system of exploitation--finally getting the rich off our backs!

AMERICAN LEGION and V.F.W.

MARCHIN' TO THE TUNE OF THE RULING CLASS

Wrapped in American flags, the American Legion leads a ceremony praising "Americanism," appropriately enough held on Wall Street in New York City.

Throughout the history of this country, veterans have played an important political and social role. From the Revolutionary War until the present,vets, because of their wartime experiences and the hardships they've faced upon returning to civilian life, have at different times been deeply involved in progressive struggles.

Following the Revolutionary War, famers, craftsmen and the poor--those who fought the war--returned to civilian life empty handed to find the land and way of life they fought for stolen from them. Groups of veterans rose up in rebellion and were met by the armed forces of the rich, often part of the same army the vets had earlier fought in. Nor was this pattern to change. Vets returned home, war after war, only to find that they had to fight for a living.

But, not all vets came home and took up the "good fight." The US ruling class was not made up of fools. They saw the great potential of veterans organizations that could be used to boost their rule, and set out to do something about it.

1917: World War I battlefields of France. Shaken to the bottom of their bank vaults by the victorious revolution in the Soviet Union, the rich were concerned that millions of battle weary WWI vets, soldiers who had borne the massive slaughter of European trench warfare, would return home angry and dissatisfied and form the backbone of an American revolutionary army. Understanding the explosive potential of these troops, Theodore Roosevelt, ex-president, personally went to France and with the help of top military officers, planned and set up the framework of a vets organization that was to be known as the American Legion.

Thus the troops returned home to hundreds of pre-constructed posts around the country, an officer structure straight out of the miliary and lots of money to be used to make sure that the Legion got off the ground.

The American Legion was created. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, at that time an organization of vets from previous war, came under the same type of leadership and direction. These organizations and others like them that followed have blazed a trail of nationalism, war-mongering patriotism, and open support for the US rulers. The Legion, most reactionary of the pack, openly participated in strike breaking, intimidation and vicious red-baiting, and as general utility bullies for the rich. Throughout the history of these groups many rank and file members have taken progressive stands on the question of war and on the struggles of vets and workers. Just as consistently they have been crushed by the various national leaderships.

The present day political role of these organization hasn't changed much from the past. As the danger of a war between the US and the Soviet Union, a war of the superpowers for control of the world, increases, these vets organizations are right out on front street with the people of America, pushing the idea of war as the best thing we can look forward to in the future. Pounding the pavement on every patriotic holiday, they march to glorify war as the people who stand to profit from the wars sit back in satisfaction that these veteran organizations are carrying out the task assigned to them.

A sideline of their political programs is the role of "veterans service organizations" that the American Legion and the VFW, in particular, labor to project to veterans. Taking credit for every major advance that vets have fought for down through the years, they say that they, and they alone, represent the interests of all vets and are in the best position to be watchdogs of vets rights.

On Memorial Day 1976, over 3.7 million vets were cut off the GI Bill. During the months leading up to this cutoff, not one of these "veterans" organizations spoke out against this move by the rich and their puppets in the government. Everyone of these organizations, through their national leadership, spoke out publicly and lobbied actively in Congress for a cut off date in benefits to Vietnam-era vets, and supported the move to limit the length of time from 10 to 8 years of eligibility. Additionally, when the GI Bill was taken from people presently in the military (and future GIs) the leadership of these organizations once again lined up in support of the cutoff.

All these groups want to make a distinction between wartime and peacetime vets; they list their priorities as VA care but this is overshadowed by national defense considerations. As they give lip service to the "terrible" treatment of Vietnam-era vets, they push for a larger military budget, compulsory military training for all Americans, more support for dictatorships in South Korea, the Phillipines and Taiwan; they leap to the defense of the Panama Canal, and vehemently oppose any form of amnesty for draft resisters.

Recently the American Legion held parades around the country to attract Vietnam vets into their organization. The pa-

Continued on Page 15

COMMUNITY COLLEGE
N. VIRGINIA

This summer vets at Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) are finding out just what the VA meant when they talk about conducting a "review" of all vets on the GI Bill.* In July the Washington DC papers started running articles on how 1900 vets at NVCC had supposedly collected almost $2 million too much last year. These 1900 vets are all to be cut off the GI Bill until the VA gets the money back. From there, the newspapers started talking about how the VA and the school were arguing over which of them was going to be responsible for trying to make the vets repay the money. The vets who had the school doors slammed shut in their faces were all but lost in the shuffle.

But vets at NVCC are angry at this attack. Whoever wins or loses that argument between the school and the VA is bound to catch hell trying to squeeze any money out of these vets. As it said in a VVAW leaflet circulating at NVCC, "We don't think we have to sit back and take this or any other attack the rich throw at us. We think we can unite and fight back. Just like the 25,000 vets did at the Bonus March in 1932 when they just about took over D. C. demanding their World War I Bonus money and work or wages for everybody."

We've all heard about long, hot summers. Well, if the VA goes through with their plans to slice 1900 vets off the Bill, we'll try to put the heat on them not only all summer but fall, winter, and spring too.

NO CUTS, NO WAY, THE G.I. BILL IS HERE TO STAY!

LEND A HAND

The song reprinted below was written by George "Red" Wilkinson, a longtime fighter for the cause of the working class in New Zealand. Written in 1935 when the danger of another war was clear, the song speaks to the unity of workers in seeing that rich man's war is not in their interests.

LEND A HAND!

When the war-lords start to thunder,
Lend a hand!
When the bosses shout for slaughter,
Lend a hand!
When they tell us we must fight,
Let us roar with all our might,
"The enemy is in our native land."

(Chorus)
Workers! Everyone who's useful!
Lend a hand!
Drive the vultures from their plunder
Lend a hand!
Workers! Soldiers! Farmers! All!
Hear the ringing world-wide call.
"The enemy is in our native land."

If you're working hard on shipboard,
Lend a hand!
Stop the war-dogs being loosened,
Lend a hand!
Every worker o'er the sea
Is our comrade, can't you see,
"The enemy is in our native land."

If you're working on the railroad,
Lend a hand!
Stop the wheels--you'll stop the war plans,
Lend a hand!
We can do our fighting here,
For our wives and children dear,
"The enemy is in our native land."

If you're serving in the army,
Lend a hand!
When they tell you "shoot your brother,"
Lend a hand!
From each barracks let arise
A bold challenge to the skies,
"The enemy is in our native land."

If you're unemployed and hungry,
Lend a hand!
When they want you for a soldier,
Lend a hand!
With the comrades of your class,
Grimly say, "They shall not pass!"
"The enemy is in our native land."

If you toil from dawn to sunset,
Lend a hand!
And the land yields but a pittance,
Lend a hand!
When the flags and banners wave,
Aye your land and country save,
"The enemy is in our native land."

Workers! Everone who's useful!
Lend a hand!
Drive the vultures from their plunder,
Lend a hand!
Let the bosses scream and shout,
They're the foe that we must rout,
"The enemy is in our native land."

LETTERS TO VVAW

THE VETERAN welcomes letters, comments and criticisms. Please write. Also, send along any poetry, drawings, photos or stories you would like to see in the paper.

I am a Dominican Republic vet and was discharged from active duty in June 1966. Last month I received a letter from the VA informing me that my educational benefits were cut. And also that because of an overpayment, I owe Uncle $am 870.20. Because of this my education may be finished. I'm 30 years old and can't afford to go back to school. I'm not the only one--3.7 million had the axe of the capitalist lowered on them: 3.7 million! If we can UNITE and let them know "we won't fight another rich man's war," we'll get the GI Bill expanded, we'll get better medical treatment at the VA Hospital; the only thing that's slowing us down is that not enough vets are speaking out: Let's get together and "get them off our backs!"

A. Blaylock
VVAW, Philly

"Can't do much at a ramshackle 81 years except send you a small check and my applause. Over the radio I hear you protesting in righteous wrath--was it at some Memorial Day observance in all its hypocrisy?--and found your address when you were VVAW/Winter Soldier Organization. I am glad to have your new address. People like me who have always opposed war as being not only a crime against humanity but clearly idiotic (except from the viewpoint of those who amass wealth from its slaughter) are considered dimwitted. Veterans who have been through the dirty business can hardly be doubted. All success to you."

(Enclosed in the letter is a quote from Brig. Gen. Evans Carlson, written to a friend shortly before his death: "I BURN UP when I think of all the good guys who went out and got killed to protect the right of a handful of SOBs to make more money for themselves.")

Dorchester, Mass.

"Bravo! I'm a 'little old lady in tennis shoes' and can't come to Philadelphia but I'll be with you in spirit."

I hope this insignificant contribution can help. I would like to join your organization and am enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope for necessary info. I am a Nam vet and would like to be a participating member of VVAW. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Acworth, Georgia

PS Give them hell on 4 July; wish I could be there.

"Sorry it can't be more--I've been on strike for 9 months and have had to work at a 'temporary' job during that time."

Washington, DC

"25¢ plus stamps from a poor, penniless coal miner who gets appeals from all over."

Windber, PA

The above letters were received by VVAW in Philadelphia in response to a mailing which talked about the July 1-4 demonstrations.

OUR STRENGTH LIES IN OUR UNITY AND STRUGGLE

VETS AND CONGRESS

Veterans are beginning to move, demanding an end to cuts and at the very least an increase in benefits to keep up with the rising inflation. With this we can see the move, often spontaneous, to go to Washington, DC to lobby Congress. But even more often this motion is not just an upsurge of angry vets, but the result of some budding bureaucrat, future political "leader," or a vet rep making sure that his funding isn't cut off.

In the 1930's this kind of "leader" was all around the Bonus March. 25,000 vets and their families went to Washington to petition "their" representatives. But, as the days dragged on, their anger rose. Throughout the months, leaders arose. Some were rank-and-file vets trying to provide the leadership needed, to honestly provide some direction. But at the same time others came to the forefront, men who saw a chance to capitalize on the anger of the vets and saw a real chance to further their own careers. These men could see that in order to promote their careers, they had to lead vets down a blind alley; they couldn't very well tell the truth by saying, "Look at these turkeys in Congress--they and the whole system could care less about you because you aren't making any profit for them." Had they told these truths, how would they be able to organize vets in the future to promote their own political careers. And they would have had a hard time getting safe little jobs in the bureaucracy.

In the early days of VVAW it was no different. The first major campaign, Dewey Canyon in 1971, was a lobbying effort. Certain leaders wanted it that way, enjoyed hobnobbing with Kennedy or some other Senator, making "important" contacts and getting coverage for some future Congressional run. Others saw the chance for really ending the war and thought that by getting Vietnam veterans together we could surely reason with the reasonable men in Congress about a war we had fought in, bled in, and won medals in. But reason wasn't what Congress wanted. And the answers from Congress showed the majority of vets there that Congress was not operating in their interests. This understanding and anger burst forth on the last day of that demonstration when thousands of vets threw their medals back with the pledge to fight against the turkeys in Congress and the rich system they represent so well.

Today, the war in Indochina is over, most of the Bonus marchers are dead, but the system hasn't changed and neither has the determination of vets to fight. The attack on the GI Bill is bringing vets forward struggling to survive and that system which is trying to crush us is also producing more politicians in and out of office, vet "pimps" and petty bureaucrats to mislead the struggle and sell out the veterans movement.

The vet "pimps" aren't all out on the streets--some of them are right in the halls of Congress. It takes very little for a Congressman or Senator to introduce a bill which will benefit vets--the taxpayers even buy him the paper to print it on. The fact that he knows the bill stands no chance, and that he has no intention of doing anything to improve the chances for it to pass doesn't matter to him. What's important to him is that he can go home to the local American Legion or VFW and win loud applause for his "stand" in favor of veterans. Or, when angry vets come to his office, he can point to someone else, loudly proclaiming his deep devotion to the cause of the "gallant veteran."

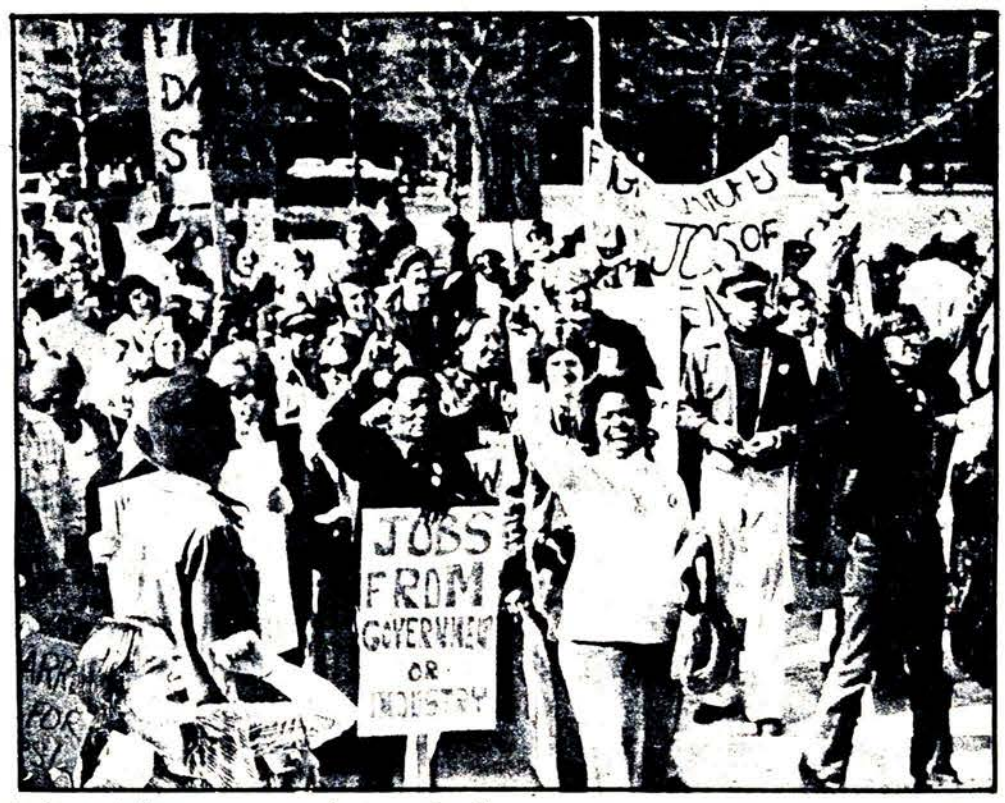
Lobbying efforts are on the rise; some of these are honest, but the con-men are also out calling for lobby-in's. A good example was the arrival of 400 vets from the East Coast in DC last May. Most of the vets were honest and angry. But the leadership paraded Congressman after union hack after pimp, all saying this is the way to struggle--talk to your senator and if he doesn't do what you want, then elect me. Or, they would say "Accept a compromise, let the GI Bill expire, and we will see about a loan program." VVAW was there too. There were just three of us with newspapers, buttons, and answers about how to fight. The people who called the lobbying effort trembled at the thought of three VVAW members and, as a result, called off the only mass rally which was planned, just in case it might "get out of hand." What they meant, of course, was out of their hands and into the hands of the vets themselves.

The lobbying was not a loss. VVAW talked to many vets. And when one Senator told an unemployed vet with 6 children to stop looking at the bad side of things, that he should "look at the 90 million working, not the 10 million unemployed, and be happy that you're free and an American," the room almost exploded in his face.

There is no doubt that lobbying will continue in the future and that people will try to direct the vets struggle into some dead end. Just as surely VVAW will be there taking on this whole rotten system and the petty pimps who try to make a career or fast buck off the misery of veterans.

Anything good we've got from this system we've had to fight for, though the so-called "leaders" such as Congressmen or Presidents, even when they opposed our struggles, claim that they, not the struggle of vets, have won victories.

UNEMPLOYED WORKERS HOLD NATIONAL MEETING



On July 5th, the day following the July 1-4 demonstrations in Philadelphia, over 70 representatives from more than 30 Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee chapters from Massachusetts to Hawaii, met in Philly for their first national meeting. UWOC began on the West Coast over five years ago and has since grown to a national organization, but the Philly demonstrations marked the first time members from across the country had joined together in one place to voice the demands of the unemployed and the entire working class. It was also the first time that elected representatives from across the country met to make plans for building UWOC and its campaigns.

The meeting on the 5th concentrated on the campaign for jobs which has been the main focus of UWOC. With 10 million Americans unemployed, with millions more looking for jobs where they can at least make a living wage, with the rich using this giant pool of unemployed workers to threaten and hold down the living standard and struggle of employed workers, the fight for jobs is a major issue facing the whole working class. This was plenty clear April of last year when 40,000 workers, mostly employed, showed up at an AFL-CIO jobs rally in Washington, DC, and with UWOC playing a leading role, thousands booed down the parade of jive politicians like Hubert Humphrey and the top union hacks who turned out to speak.

UWOC brought its petition to the July 4th demonstration demanding jobs at union wages or enough income to cover the cost of living until there are jobs. The quarter of a million signatures collected by July 4th were carried in the front of the march in a pickup truck.

At their meeting, UWOC decided that chapters should continue to collect signatures on the Jobs or Income petition as a part of organizing to win jobs. The overall approach UWOC should be taking to the campaign for jobs was summed up in a slogan put forward by people from New York and Northern New Jersey, "Dig in and Break out," meaning fan the demand and struggle for jobs everywhere it crops up and spread it into a powerful fighting movement involving not only those without jobs, but their employed class brothers and sisters, too.

The meeting discussed the battles to defeat the wide range of government attacks launched on the unemployed in recent months. One of the spearheads of this attack is the Hoffman Bill in New Jersey which would force unemployed workers to take any job even if it meant a paycut of up to 35%--enough to drive many workers down to minimum wage. This is even more than an attack on the right to unemployment insurance won by the working class in its mighty upsurge of struggle during the Depression. It is an open attempt to force down the wages of all workers in that state. One NJ official showed what the capitalists are planning by describing the bill as "ten yards along the mile we have to go."

A similar law went into effect in Rhode Island on July 4th, another Bicentennial treat. Governor Rhodes of Ohio is talking about how using this kind of gimmick will "attract more jobs" to his state. New Jersey UWOC has organized demonstrations against the Hoffman Bill and other chapters are ready to take up the battle against such schemes intended to provide the owners of industry with a constant supply of beaten-down workers who are hungry enough to accept any job thereby force down wages and increase the profits of the rich.

The real kicker though is the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill, a chunk of federal legislation proposed by Hubert Humphrey and one of his congressional sidekicks. When the Bill first came to public attention in the early months of 1976, it added fuel to the flames of anger and rage of the unemplyed nationwide. Originally the Bill called for $21 billion for 3 million jobs, roughly $3,000 a year, $250.00 a month or $1.56 an hour, 1/3 of what the Department of Labor says is required to keep a family alive and in good health.

Confronted at Congressional hearings by angry groups of the unemployed led by UWOC, congressional stooges backed down from their original facts and figures by saying that the jobs would be at "prevailing wages." What prevailing wages meant wasn't immediately clear but the congressmen let the cat out of the bag by saying that the jobs would be "public service jobs" meaning not as high paying as industry jobs because they didn't want to attract workers from important industries. In short, it would be minimum wages or below. Presidential hopeful Carter, the darling of the Democrats, took it one step further when he stated, "Why pay someone $80 a week on unemployment when we could pay them $100 a week to repair the railroads?"

This is an all-out attack on employed workers as well as the unemployed. Not only would the Bill force unemployed workers to take jobs at starvation wages at the same time losing their unemployment benefits, but the people on this program would be scabbing on union workers at lower wages and being used to drive down wages of workers everywhere.

All these battles will be taken up in the fighting spirit of "We Won't Scab and We Won't Starve!" UWOC is not some social service agency claiming to provide jobs that don't exist; it is a fighting organization of the whole working class, pointing the resistance of the unemployed at the handful of parasites, whose very system has unemployment built in.

The end of the meeting in Philadelphia reflected its accomplishments in laying out plans for building and uniting the struggles of the unemployed. It also laid the basis for even greater advances--the representatives took home to their chapters a proposal that UWOC hold its first national convention sometime next spring!

As veterans, we in VVAW are no strangers to unemployment, understanding how vets are hard hit by unemployment along with millions of others in this country. We join with UWOC in struggle and raise as a major demand of our program the demand of "Jobs or Income Now." We congratulate UWOC on the tremendous advances they have made towards a national organization of the unemployed and look forward to working shoulder to shoulder with them in the struggle ahead.

MARCHIN'...

Continued from Page 11

rades were dismal failures that brought out very few Vietnam vets. When questioned about the lack of Vietnam veterans in their membership, the Illinois Commander stated: "It's always like this after every war. Don't worry, they'll come around after they mellow."

Mellow? What kind of crap is that? Vietnam vets have had a bellyful of their wars and we've seen what we have to look forward to when we come home--high unemployment, filthy butchershops called VA hospitals, crummy benefits that get slashed everytime we turn around. Mellow, hell! We're fighting mad.

These turkeys must be blind if they think we're going to jump in line with them and their rubber-stamp policies of the US ruling class. You don't need a crystal ball to see that another war is around the corner and while these guys in the American Legion, VFW, etc. warm people up for that war, it's up to veterans everywhere to speak out against them, to tell the truth about these wars, about who fights and dies in them and about who gets rich as a result.

Holding high the banner of "vets interests" and talking long and loud of their "fight" to see that "vets get what is coming to them," these organizations take up the questions of vets in the narrowest possible way, attempting to isolate vets as some kind of special interest group. But their actions show that they could give a damn about vets. Their job is to get out on the street, spew patriotic garbage and build for imperialist wars on command. We refuse their attempts to separate vets from other people; we say that vets need decent benefits, and that youth and workers need jobs, not uniforms and rich man's wars.

The vets who marched as the VVAW contingent in the Philly demonstrations on July 1-4 laid it on the line when they chanted "We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War--It's the Working Class We're Fighting For." Hell yes, we'll build a vets movement, but it won't have anything to do with the one that the rich built and still prop up. The vets struggle we're building is one that fights for what we need to survive and proudly stands on the side of working people.

Why an American Soldier Chose China

In 1950 during the height of the Korean War, PFC James Veneris was captured by the Chinese who had come to the aid of the people of North Korea. Three years later, while prisoners of war were being exchanged, Veneris was one of a group of American GIs who refused "repatriation" and decided to stay in China. Now, over 20 years later, Veneris is returning to the US to visit his family here, after which he will fly back to China.

In the early 1950's there was much questioning in the media concerning why any American soldier would chose not to return to the US, and much speculation that he could only have been "brainwashed." However, in the letter partially reprinted below and which was written to one of his boyhood friends in 1955, Veneris explains his reasons. Many of the lessons he talks about in this letter are similar to what Vietnam veterans learned about the nature of the enemy--that the enemy was not the Vietnamese, but the class of people who sent us off to fight their rich man's war.

Veneris's letter begins by describing his state of mind before he re-enlisted in the Army in 1950:

"After hearing and reading so much about how bad the Communists were, how cruel they were to people, I finally re-enlisted so I could do my part... to free the North Korean people from slavery ... to stop communism from spreading.

"All I wanted to do was to get over there, clean the mess up and then come home as soon as possible. After I was in Korea for a while, a lot of questions started to pop in my mind. I saw how well the North Korean people fought, even the old people, women and children all fought, real good; why should people that we are supposed to free fight against us so hard.. why did the (United Nations) troops behave so badly, why did they call these people gooks?

"When I was captured on November 28, 1950, all sorts of ideas came to mind --I will die very soon, torture, starvation, etc. But what happened instead, they (the Chinese) shook hands with me, gave me cigarettes and acted very friendly... We were provided with warm food... warm rooms to sleep in.

"I could not understand why the Chinese did not just take the food... Believe me it was very cold on those days. I did not have a coat--some six-foot Chinese soldier with an overcoat... loaned it to me.

"In camp, I still mistrusted these people, but... after testing the sincerity of the Chinese people, I was convinced that they were our friends and wanted to help all of us.

"I finally learned to distinguish between the American people and the wealthy wheels I never once in speech or in writing material ever hear the Chinese people say anything bad about the American people. In fact, I see where they sympathize with them.

"In the POW camp, the Chinese had what they called a lenient treatment policy toward POWs. Who wants wars? You? Me? Our folks, the common people that work every day? Do the workers want war? Because the people don't profit by them; they are the ones to suffer from them. That is why we had such good treatment from the Chinese. We were not responsible for wars or starting them...."

Retired General Sick As System He Served

"WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEN."

Even in retirement Major General Edwin A Walker can't keep his hands to himself. Walker was recently arrested in Dallas for "fondling the genitals" of a cop in a city park men's room.

This degenerate was held up by the ruling class as a moral, upstanding leader of men for his entire military career in the US Army, from 1931 when he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant to his retirement in 1961 as a Major General. In light of his recent arrest it raises the question of where he was really trying to lead his men.

During his military career, he served the rulers of this country in key posts. In the Korean War he was Deputy Chief of Staff for Prisoners of War. Later on he served as Advisor to the Commander-in-Chief of the Taiwanese Army, no doubt using the anti-communist training he got in Korea to prop up the illegitimate government of Chiang Kai-Shek. After he was booted out of the service for trying to indoctrinate American troops with his reactionary politics he travelled around the country speaking for the John Birch Society.

Deep-Throat Walker should get all the scorn he deserves. Nobody knows how many men under his command were propositioned by him. This faggot didn't get as far with most, though, as he did with that cop who actually is as sick as Walker--letting the general get his hands in his pants. Walker should be locked up in solitary for the rest of his life so that nobody could hear his politics and so that nobody can get in the way of his wandering hands.

General Walker is the latest in a long line of people who've been exposed recently for their deviant sexual behavior. G. Harold Carswell, a nominee for the Supreme Court was caught with a man in a car--and they weren't taking driving lessons either. Congressman Hays and his cronies have turned the Capitol Building into a house of prostitution.

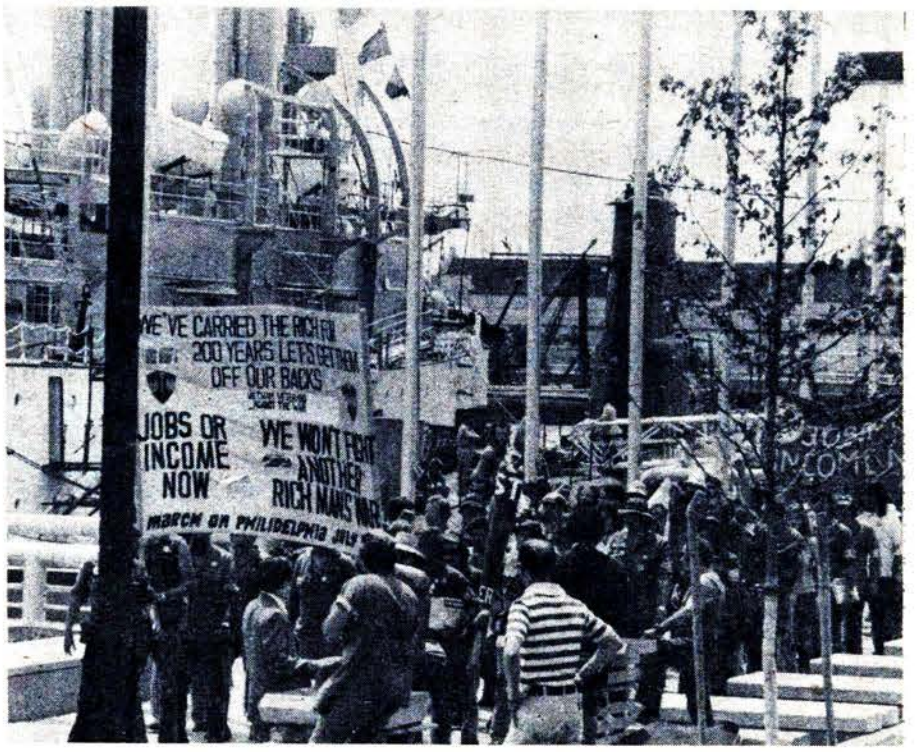
The ruling class pushes this behavior. They glorify it and encourage it. While the great majority of the American people are decent and work hard to make ends meet, these fags, pimps and prostitutes parade around the country having a gay time, writing books and stumbling into the Tidal Basin with Fanny Foxe.

We're sick of these high-class deviants and we're sick of this rotten system that we live under which fosters it. And we're sick of the ruling rich, who are the biggest pimps of all.

EDITORIAL

IN STEP WITH THE WORKING CLASS

The July 1-4 demonstrations were a real first for Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Many of us had demonstrated before--had marched with students before in hundreds of antiwar demonstrations, had joined with thousands of other vets to throw away our medals in Washington DC, had demonstrated for decent benefits for all vets--but never before had we seen the power and the determination that the working class brought into Philadelphia on July 1st through 4th. The real heart and soul of these demonstrations was the thousands of workers from rank-and-file caucuses, trade unions and city-wide workers organizations who came from every section of the country to say, "We've Carried the Rich for 200 Years, Let's Get Them Off Our Backs," and to expose the lies of the rich with the demands of Jobs or Income and We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War.



VVAW had been one of the first callers of the demonstrations and we certainly understood the importance of having a militant and disciplined demonstration. We took up our tasks seriously. Our contingent, multi-national and with vets from every branch of the service, marched in step and sang out our political slogans with military cadence. Wherever we went we were met with cheers from the masses of people on the streets of Philadelphia. As the speaker from VVAW brought out, "In the military we hated to march. But today we were proud because we march with fellow workers from around the country."

We veterans brought added strength to the working people marching in Philadelphia. And it was not just our commitment to maintain a high degree of discipline in the face of police tricks and provocation, nor was it just our ability to stay in step, marching down the street in formation, nor our willingness to teach others how to march. It was because of who we were--the simple fact that we were veterans was a blow to the power of the ruling rich in this country. Because there we were--veterans--the boys they had sent off to "serve the country" at home and overseas, the guys who did the shooting and fighting in such places as Santo Domingo, Vietnam, or Korea, and we were marching on July 4th, Independence Day. But we were not marching with them, the rich, on their great day for patriotism.

The politicians and capitalists in this country were hoping to have the stage all to themselves on July 4th. They were hoping to get over with their schemes to use the Bicentennial to push their "national unity," heal the wounds of the Vietnam war and of Watergate. Unite again, they were preaching, to go forward the next 200 years as "one nation, indivisible," with the same patriotic tranquility of the 1950's, happy and united. Of course this unity, this patriotism, meant with them on top, profiting from our misery, and preparing again to send us off to war to protect their system and their rule over us.

And while the rich hoped that all vets would rally behind the American Legion--in faithful servitude to their blood-soaked rule--we were saying that we had learned better. We learned from the rice paddies in Vietnam, from the run-down inadequate VA hospitals, from the long and despair-filled unemployment lines; we knew better from bitter experience. And we said it loud: "Rich man, Rich man. We Won't fight your wars no more. Rich man, Rich man. It's the working class we're fighting for. Rich man--your day is done.

On July 4th, 1976, the rich didn't get the "stage" all to themselves. The working class gathered its forces and stood up to them, drawing the line between our interests and theirs, saying we have nothing in common except a battlefield. And we Vietnam veterans were proud to be on the right side.

VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR